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ABSTRACT

New and continuing students at Minneapolis Community College (MCC) are permitted to enroll and register through the first week of classes. Students who apply and register just before classes begin or during the first 5 days of a quarter always seem to require more staff and counselor time than normal. A study was conducted to determine whether the grades and retention rates of these late-enrolling students justified the extra time and effort required to enroll them. The study examined data on 175 new students who registered for classes between 3 days before classes started and 8 days into the quarter, comparing the number of credits taken, grade point average, and next-term persistence for this group with data for the total student body. Study findings revealed: (1) 25.1% of the late-enrolling new students earned no grade points, as compared to 21.4% for the student body as a whole; (2) the proportion of the late group who received an "A" grade was 28.0%, compared to 17.6% for the total student body; and (3) of the 175 late-enrolling new students, only 23.4% registered the following quarter, compared to rates of retention of 60.2% to 65.5% recorded for the student body as a whole in studies conducted in 1976 and 1979. (HB)

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SHOULD LATE ENROLLING NEW STUDENTS BE REGISTERED FOR CLASSES?

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April 1984

JC 840 211

Should Late Enrolling New Students Be Registered for Classes?

June Stein, College Research Officer
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The Problem

Minneapolis Community College is an open door college and will enroll new students and register all students through the first week of classes. Students who apply and register just before classes begin or during the first five class days of a quarter always seem to take more staff and counselor time, partly because of the hectic period that is normal at such times. For example, during this period students may cancel or add classes for the quarter, special problems occur involving many of the student body already registered, and many college deadlines must be met. Often classes desirable for new students are filled at this time, and other suitable ones must be sought, a time consuming process. The question periodically arises, therefore, of whether the extra time and effort required for this late applying group of students are worthwhile in terms of the success of these students both in their course work and retention rates.

The Method

To investigate this question, a list of late registering students was kept for winter quarter 1984. Classes began on January 3, and the period of concern was established as three registration days before classes began and eight days into the quarter when the last new student was registered (there are always exceptions to the five day rule). Of the 335 students who registered for winter quarter during this period,

175, or 52.2 percent, were new students. They included special students not interested in a degree and part- and full-time degree seeking students comprising both transfer and first time college students.

Table I, attached, categorizes the new student group by the number of credits they registered for winter quarter: 1-7 credits, 8-11 credits, or 12 or more credits. A further tabulation shows their winter quarter grade point average (GPA) and proportion in the categories named above. In addition, whether the student registered for a second quarter in spring 1984 is shown using the same credit categories as used for winter registration.

Credit Registration and G.P.A.

With respect to winter quarter, over half the new students, 54.9 percent, registered for one to seven credits. Whether they did so because their intent was to take but one course or so or because other courses they wanted were filled cannot be determined. Another 10.3 percent registered for eight to eleven credits and 16.6 percent were full-time students. Almost a fifth of the late new students, 18.3 percent, apparently never paid fees and, thus, had no academic record for winter quarter. In addition, a fourth of the total group, 25.1 percent, earned no credit as indicated by "N", "I", "*", or "W" on their grade report. These two groups of students plus those who earned G.P.A.'s of 1.0 through 1.9 made up 50.3 percent of all new late registering students. In contrast, earning a 4.0 G.P.A. were 22.9 percent of this group.

Data to compare these results with those for the total student body are available. A tally of G.P.A.'s for the student body was made for fall quarter 1983. The proportion of students earning no grade points was 21.4 percent, approximately what it has been in a series of similar studies made periodically over the years. When the late new student "0" G.P.A.'s are recalculated for winter quarter excluding those with no academic records,

the comparable proportion is 30.8 percent, or 9.4 percent higher. Also higher, however, are the proportion of the late group who received 4.0, an "A" average, 28.0 percent when calculated the same way in contrast to the student body's 17.6 percent.

One Quarter Retention

Over a fourth of the students with a 4.0 G.P.A. registered for spring quarter 1984 while only two students or 4.5 percent of the 44 who earned no credit registered for another quarter. Of those who registered winter but paid no fees, two of the 32 students registered for classes spring quarter. Of the total group of 175 late new students, 23.4 percent registered for spring quarter, almost half of the full-time students, somewhat fewer of the 8-11 credit students and fewest of the 1-7 credit students. Thus we can say that the one quarter dropout rate overall was 76.6 percent. Retention studies completed for students entering in 1973, 1976 and 1979 show attrition ranging from 34.5 to 39.8 percent after one quarter or almost half of that found for the new late registering students. However, the rate for special students only (1-7 credits) in these retention studies ranged from 56.0 to 63.4 percent in the same period. Although over half the new late students were in this category, their attrition rate still is clearly higher than any found in the retention studies.

Conclusion

Given this information and assuming it is representative of other quarters, is it worthwhile to enroll new late registering students? While higher proportions may earn "A" averages, more also earn nothing and one quarter retention is poorer. Obviously, the answer involves a value judgment, one which will undoubtedly vary depending on whether enrollment is deemed sufficient or deficient.

Table I

Academic Record and Two Quarter Retention of
New Students Who Registered "Late"* for
Winter Quarter 1984

Fall '84 G.P.A.	Winter 1984 Credit Registration Category 1-7	8-11	12+	Not Reg.	Tot. N	Stud. %	Registered Spring 1984 Winter Registration Category 1-7	8-11	12+	Not Reg.	Tot. N	Stud. %
4.0	31	5	4		40	22.9	9		2		11	26.8
3.9			1		1	.6			1		1	2.4
3.8			1		1	.6						
3.7		3			3	1.7		3			3	7.3
3.6												
3.5		1	1		2	1.1						
3.4												
3.3			1		1	.6						
3.2	1		1		2	1.1			1		1	2.4
3.1	1				1	.6	1				1	2.4
3.0	10	3	3		16	9.1	1	2	1		4	9.8
2.9												
2.8												
2.7			1		1	.6			1		1	2.4
2.6			2		2	1.1			2		2	4.9
2.5	1	1	1		3	1.7	1	1	1		3	7.3
2.4			1		1	.6			1		1	2.4
2.3			1		1	.6			1		1	2.4
2.2												
2.1												
2.0	10	1	1		12	6.9	2	1			3	7.3
1.9												
1.8												
1.7												
1.6												
1.5	1		1		2	1.1	1		1		2	4.9
1.4	1				1	.6						
1.3												
1.2		1			1	.6		1			1	2.4
1.1												
1.0	2				2	1.1	1				1	2.4
I,W,*,.0	33	3	8		44	25.1	1		1		2	4.9
P	4		1		5	2.9			1		1	2.4
V	1				1	.6						
Not Reg.**				32	32	18.3				2	2	4.9
Tot. N.	96	18	29	32	175	100.1	17	8	14	2	41	99.7
% of 175	54.9	10.3	16.6	18.3	101.1							
% of Wtr.'84 Category							17.7	44.4	48.3	6.3	23.4	

*Classes began Jan. 3, 1984. "Late" registration = Dec. 27, 1983 through Jan. 11, 1984.
**Not registered = Never paid fees after registering.

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